

Economic Development Advisory Council

12.10.14 Meeting minutes

Americana Room – Hampshire Hills

Minutes approved on January 14, 2015

Present:

Dale White, Leighton A White, Inc. (Acting Chair)
Chris Costantino, Milford Conservation Commission
Lyle Fulkerson, HPM Insurance
Don Jalbert, Milford HS Applied Technology Center
Janet Langdell, Planning Board
Penny Seaver, Bean Seaver & Smith

Excused:

Matt Ciardelli, Ciardelli Fuel Co
Wendy Hunt, MIT
Sean Trombly, Trombly Gardens

Perspective members:

David Hammer, Contemporary Chrysler
Marcelle O'Neill, Papa Joe's

Guest:

Jay Spezzaferri, Masiello Group

Bill Parker, Director Community Development
Gary Chabot, NH DRED
Shirley Wilson, Recording secretary

D. White chaired the meeting in Matt Ciardelli's absence and called the meeting to order at 7:30AM. He introduced and welcomed potential new members, David Hammer and Marcelle O'Neil.

Minutes:

C. Costantino made a motion to accept the minutes from 9/24/14 as submitted. D. White seconded, J. Langdell abstained and all else in favor.

Presentation for the Wadleigh Memorial Library Expansion:

Michelle Sampson, Library Director
Ron Lamarre, Lavallee Brensinger

M. Sampson explained that there is such a strong connection between public libraries, especially when they are located in a downtown area, and economic development. Using a quote from the Urban Library Council, "Libraries are sustainability partners" she explained that libraries aid local economies, provide information to entrepreneurs, and helping job seekers improve their skills and find employment. The library in Milford is really a community hub; it boosts the local economy and serves as an anchor for the downtown. It is an economic engine that provides small business support. Public libraries compliment not compete with business and the expansion will provide access to technologies, off hours meeting rooms and additional parking. R. Lamarre reviewed the building specifics.

The presentation, as well as information on the building rebuild can be found on the library's website at www.wadleigh.org/building.

D. Jalbert spoke about the upcoming Scrabble Tournament on 3/15/15 that is a fundraising opportunity on behalf of the Milford Lions Club, the School District and the Friends of the Library to support this initiative and literary.

J. Langdell clarified that the library project has been on the CIP for many years, per state RSA, in order to collect impact fees. She then inquired about the capacity of the meeting rooms and asked if there had been any discussion with the Recreation Department to utilize these rooms for their programs. R. Lamarre said the large room seats 125-130 people and the smaller areas seat 6-8. M. Sampson replied that we haven't talked with the Recreation Department specifically but did meet with the Milford Area Senior Program Board several years ago.

They were in support of this. It is already a natural and regular gathering area for seniors. She then referenced a joint venture in Townsend, MA. J. Langdell said she was thinking as more of a community center. R. Lamarre replied that the intent of the large space is exactly for that purpose and referenced the Kimball Library where it is used by scouts, wii for seniors, school sports teams and miscellaneous programs. That is also why we designed a separate access to the multi-purpose room and area with moveable partitions to better utilize the space.

D. Hammer inquired if there would be any environmental impact. R. Lamarre said it would be more energy efficient and the indoor air quality will change. It will resolve the current situation that has many band-aids. The new facility will be temperature controlled with sensors for Co2, HVAC, daylight and lighting. Operational costs and off-gases will be reduced and materials like carpets and paints will last longer. It will be more sustainable and maintenance friendly. The roof has also been designed to incorporate possible future solar panels as it is faces south.

Warrant Article Update

B. Parker said the Selectmen have not completed their list yet, but those that will have impact on economic development will be the library expansion, the West Elm St water line extension, and the roads and bridges article. This group's support would be very important as one of EDAC's goals is to push for infrastructure improvements. D. White added that the funding has to be borne by both the individual and the commercial and industrial arenas. EDAC, the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission have all helped to support a controlled increase in new construction and new commercial businesses to help fund the tax base. It's so important to educate the public that economic development is such a key aspect to fund the needs of the community.

Update on the UNH Business Retention and Expansion Program:

B. Parker gave an overview of the work to date and said that the volunteer team visits have been going along moderately well. The survey itself is generic and not all questions apply to all businesses. L. Fulkerson explained that there have been mixed responses but many businesses said they were excited to see the Chamber and the towns actually taking a role to try to understand the economics in the town and to make things better. B. Parker added that for some businesses, this is the first time the Town has contacted them and for others these visits acknowledged their connection to the town. P. Seaver recounted her experiences with Ciardelli Fuel, Suburban Propane, Connecticut Plastics/Controlled Fluidics and Steve Desmarais. One response was that although the company really liked having their business located in Milford and actually purchased some investment property here, they had issues with hiring and retaining skilled employees. B. Parker said one of the interview questions pertains to immediate issues that we can help address. Degree Controls is downsizing because they just don't need the physical space while Daytron is growing and is looking for more storage space. We're finding out how to help the existing businesses. L. Fulkerson said the takeaway is that the Town being proactive in this process and the concept of this project is to retain businesses so all the feedback and comments relate to that. Ultimately UNH will process the data and come back to the Towns with three goals that should be factored into some long range planning. B. Parker said he would send a copy of the survey out to the EDAC members. L. Fulkerson said the results will take a while and the target is March, 2015.

D. Jalbert asked where the schools fit into this and how does the information regarding skillsets get communicated. B. Parker said information will come out of this survey, such as a need for skilled auto technicians. J. Langdell asked if there were follow up questions regarding specifics and details. B. Parker replied hopefully that level of detail comes out in the interview. D. Hammer said the key, in his case, is educating the parents. Every dealership in the State is short on technicians and the pipeline doesn't have a lot of new people coming through. Manufacturing also faces the same problems. D. White added the skills required for the construction industry to the discussion.

D. Jalbert brought up WMUR TV's segment on "Hometown Heroes" and said athletics are an integral part of the development of our young people, but why can't we have something like that maybe called "Working for NH" on a different night for the technical students. Do the same thing to celebrate high school students in the trades from across the different occupational programs. He has spoken with many individuals who thought this is a great idea but cannot seem to get that door open. J. Spezzaferri suggested reaching out to Dean Kamen. He also stressed the importance of connections and relationships between students and manufacturers through programs and internships. There is a huge need for young men and women who have the life skills and the training to do the

physical work. J. Langdell asked how many people actually understand Applied Technology Centers and how they work. The discussion went full circle back to educating parents. G. Chabot added that he hears this discussion from all communities across the State. The schools have limited resources and there is a lot of pressure on everybody.

Status of Finalization of Community Economic Development Survey

To be discussed at the next meeting.

EDAC Goals/Work Plan for 2015 Discussion

- Education for economic development.
- Liaisons between EDAC and the community
- BR&E results may drive action plan
- EDAC column in the Cabinet Press; use as a pulpit to get the word out to the public.
- Regular information on PEG access
- Tie into the Milford Forward Newsletter
- Website

B. Parker said that his project for the Economic Development program he's enrolled in is to create the basis for an economic development website, which will be forwarded to this group. J. Spezzaferri suggested using Forward Milford as the branding. J. Langdell said it is important to tie all the pieces together.

G. Chabot referenced the speaker at yesterday's economic development meeting and said that Southern New Hampshire is not in recovery but in transition. This is the new normal, relative to history. The United States has had the strongest economy over the last 100 years, but that was abnormal. Over the last nineteen centuries, it was China and as we are becoming more of a global economy we are becoming more normal. Also New Hampshire's aging demographics will play a large role, so the word transition is very critical. The average age in skilled trades and manufacturing is over fifty and there are not enough younger people coming up the ranks. Some of the outlining towns are really hurting with the population decrease and Milford is on the cusp. It is a challenge to find workers and the future is sobering. D. White said his fear with the added tax items is that they have to be funded by one source, the tax base only. How do we do it and how do we pay for it? J. Langdell said those are the questions. What are our priorities and what is the big picture? G. Chabot added that the lack of energy and the cost of energy are huge. Two major suppliers have gone offline but the needs are going up. He noted that Kinder Morgan is looking at putting a pipeline in New Hampshire and while people don't want it in their back yard, the need is real. B. Parker said officials from the Town met with Kinder Morgan yesterday and they will start the public education and outreach process in January. The general route will follow the power line corridor underground.

Community Development updates:

Ocean State Job Lots purchased the Stop N Shop building and are undergoing a 40,000SF renovation.

CVS will likely be going before the Planning Board in January.

Possible multi-family development off Capron Rd.

Alene Candles expansion.

Ametek is moving into 53 Meadowbrook Dr and bringing fifty new employees.

There is also some interest in the Brox properties, but no information is available yet.

Other Business:

J. Spezzaferri introduced himself and said he is a realtor but also works with a number of investors. We are looking into the feasibility of bringing a hotel in. He feels there is enough of a need in this area and is looking at some initiatives. As a real estate agent, he also offered assistance to this group.

Next meeting will be second Wednesday in January.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05AM